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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/593,562	09/20/2006	Kenji Okada	25612-000006/US	2686
30593	7590	12/31/2009	EXAMINER	
HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.			BUSHEY, CHARLES S	
P.O. BOX 8910			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
RESTON, VA 20195			1797	
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
12/31/2009		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/593,562	<b>Applicant(s)</b> OKADA ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b> Scott Bushey	<b>Art Unit</b> 1797

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 October 2009.

2a) This action is FINAL.      2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-41 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9-20-06, 7-30-09

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group II, claims 20-33 in the reply filed on October 30, 2009 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that previously independent claims 1 and 34 have been amended to depend from claim 20 either directly or indirectly, and thus the claim groupings are no longer distinct. This is found persuasive and the requirement withdrawn.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The claim language as currently recited does not make grammatical sense in many instances. For example, "humidify element" should apparently be replaced by "humidification element" throughout the claims. Other examples of indefinite language within the claims are "connect portion", "retaining engage means", "connect member", and "humidify segment" to mention a few. Applicant should carefully amend all of the claims to clarify the intentions of the claim recitations.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1, 4, 7-9, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 28, 31, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Hall (Fig. 2; col. 2, lines 42-52).
6. Claims 20-28, and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by JP 54-36357 (Figs. 1-3; note especially the slit or notch (7) in the humidification element (6) of the Figures).
7. Claims 20, 21, 23, 25, 28, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Steiner (Figs. 1-7; col. 3, lines 1-6).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

10. Claims 5, 6, 10, 11, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hall taken in view of JP 54-36357.

Hall (Fig. 2; col. 2, lines 42-52) as applied above substantially disclose applicant's invention as recited by instant claims 5, 6, 10, 11, and 19, except for the humidifying element including a slit or notch and a blower being provided in the vicinity of the humidifying element.

JP 54-36357 (Figs. 1-3; note especially the slit or notch (7) in the humidification element (6) of the Figures) as applied above disclose the well known inclusion of a slit or notch in a folded humidifying element, and a blower location adjacent to the element to promote moisture dispersal to the surroundings from the element. It would have been obvious for an artisan at the time of the invention, to provide the humidifying element as taught by Hall with a slit or notch, in view of the Japanese reference, since such would avoid the undesirable overpressurization of the device by allowing for a bypass of the element by gas under high pressure through the slit or notch in the element. It would have also been obvious for an artisan at the time of the invention, to provide a blower closely adjacent to the element of Hall, in view of the Japanese reference, since such would provide for a greater delivery of moisture to the surroundings as compared with a device relying upon natural convection only.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

11. Claims 2, 3, 12-17, 29, 30, and 35-41 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Conclusion***

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.
13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott Bushey whose telephone number is 571 272-1153. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 6:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Duane Smith can be reached on 571 272-1166. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Scott Bushey  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1797

/S. B./  
12-29-09

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Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797